Broomfield Cottage Gardeners' Society

www.broomfieldcottagegardenerssociety.co.uk

Spring Newsletter 2026

Dear Members

Well it sometimes feels as though Spring has arrived – and then it disappears again! Regardless, it is still time though for our quarterly newsletter to bring you up to date on what has happened and what will be happening over the next few months.

BCGS AGM 28th January 2026

We had a good turnout for our Annual General Meeting. Our thanks to Malcolm Taylor for stepping in to chair it – he did a sterling job! The official business of the meeting included reports on finance, membership and the shows followed by election of the committee members. The minutes have been circulated by email and are also available on our website and at the Barn notice board.

The committee is broadly unchanged from last year but Selina Matthews has taken over the role of secretary and Sue Hubble will now be responsible for membership. Angela Marriage also decided to step down as President after 12 years of service. Malcolm Deacon has kindly agreed to take on that role.

The official business of the AGM was followed by a presentation on the work of Essex Search and Rescue which was our charity for 2024/25. A cheque for £810.54p was then presented to Claire, Jackie and Cyrus (the rescue dog) by Nick Welch – this was the total raised at our charity fundraising events last financial year.



BCGS 150 year anniversary and archive material

It was noted at the AGM that the Society will be celebrating 150 years of existence in 2029. The Committee will be considering ways to mark the occasion so if you have any ideas please put them forward. It was also suggested that some of the BCGS archive material could be suitable for storing at the Essex Records Office. Malcolm Deacon has taken on the task of sifting through the documents we currently hold and liaising with Neil Wiffen on how to take this forward. Neil has suggested we check with our members for any additional material before we get an archivist from ERO to assess whether any of it is suitable. So if anyone has any historic documents relating to the Society please let us know.

Evening Talks

Our programme of evening talks for this winter has now finished. We've enjoyed some varied topics ranging from the history of Easton Lodge gardens and the origins of the D'Arcy Spice apple to the benefits of organic farming and the role of fungi in the environment The talks have been very well attended which is encouraging. Anita is now working on the programme for 2026/27 so if you have any ideas or suggestions please get in touch via anitaarocker@yahoo.com.

Future Events

Charity Plant Sale

We will be holding our annual charity Plant Sale (in aid of SVP Furniture Bank) on Sunday 17th May from 10am - 12.00 noon at The Barn on the Broomfield Allotments site. The entrance is between 149 & 151 Main Road. This event is open to everyone (not just BCGS members), so please spread the word and come along to select some very competitively priced plants or seedlings, both flowers and vegetables, for your house, garden or allotment. If you would like to donate some plants then please bring these along from 9 a.m. on the morning.

Visit to Easton Lodge Gardens

As mentioned in the previous newsletter we are arranging a group visit to Easton Lodge and can now confirm that it will take place on Thursday 21st May with an arrival time of 11.00 am. There will be a small charge of £5 per person which will include a tour of the garden and refreshments. We would like to collect the payment prior to the visit so that we can be sure to meet the minimum requirement of 12 people attending. Please either drop your payment at the Barn (see opening times further down) or to Selina (Haggards, Gutters Lane, CM1 7BT) or to Christine (88 Chichester Drive CM1 7RY) in an envelope clearly marked with your name.

Flower and Produce Shows

It's time to start planning your entries for our two annual shows! Most of the schedules have now been delivered but if you haven't yet received one it should be with you very shortly. Do make a note of the dates which are 12th July for the summer show and 27th September for the autumn show.

The seeds for the sweet pea challenge and the fuchsia cuttings have all been distributed and we will email once dahlia, chrysanthemum and chilli plants are ready for members to take away and grow on. For all of you budding bakers there will be our usual bread making challenge – again flour and a recipe will be available in due course.

Please help our shows to be a success by entering, offering to help or just visiting on the day.

Without the support of our members the shows will not happen so please take a look at the schedule when it arrives and think about what you could enter. If you've never entered before why not make this year the year to have a go – it's great fun and you might even win something. If you are unsure of anything we're happy to help! There are also lots of photos in our gallery section (within the 'shows' tab) of the website which may be helpful.

Open Gardens

We hope to start this year's programme of open gardens in May and will let you have details nearer the time. They will take place through the summer months either in the evening or in some cases on a Sunday afternoon. There are still a couple of gaps so feel free to volunteer your garden no matter how big or small. Over the years we have found that members enjoy a social chat and also pick up ideas from each other. We don't charge members to visit the gardens, but if you agree, we have a charity box should people wish to donate. Some people supply refreshments, but this is purely optional. If you would like to participate please give Donna a call on 07729 239613 or send an e-mail to donnahance@sky.com. If you have previously opened your garden and would be interested in opening it again in the future, Donna would love to hear from you.

Barn News

The Barn still has seed potatoes, onions and shallots for sale now at reduced prices of £1 for onions and shallots and £2.45 for potatoes. We stock a range of composts including Clover 60 litre bags (£6.50 each or 3 for £18) and John Innes. Fleece and netting to protect your plants is available by the metre as well as canes to support them! There is also a wide range of other garden sundries, including Kings Seeds, all of which are competitively priced. **Opening times are 10am-11am on Fridays and 10am-noon on Sundays.**

Other events and news

- **Little Waltham spring flower show – Saturday 11th April – 2.00 to 4.00 p.m. Little Waltham Memorial Hall**
  Bumper plant stall, refreshments and raffle. All information plus the show schedule can be found on: http://www.littlewalthamgardeningclub.co.uk

- **Essex Dahlia Society plant sale – 16th May 10.00 a.m Broomfield Village Hall**

Membership

Our membership year runs from October to September. The cards this year are grey so if you have a purple card it's out of date! You can renew at the Barn or at any of our events. At £5 per person (£4 if over 60) it is very good value and entitles you to:

- use of the Trading Hut to purchase discounted seeds and garden sundries
- access to our open gardens (details below)
- vote at our AGM
- discounted entry to any other events such as evening talks and visits

Equally if you no longer wish to be on our mailing list please let us know by e-mail to bcgsshowsecretary@gmail.com.

Royal Horticultural Society Card

Don’t forget that we have an RHS membership card at the Barn which members can book out for ad-hoc visits. It provides 50% discount off entry for 2 adults to any RHS garden but is not accepted during Flower Shows or Glow illuminations events.

Website

Please visit our website, which provides information on the Society's activities at **www broomfieldcottagegardenerssociety.co.uk** and let us have any comments or suggestions. We also have a second website for users of mobile devices (smartphone or tablet).

Facebook site

Please also access our facebook site where regular updates are issued. You can search in Facebook under "Broomfield Cottage Gardeners Society" or type the following link into your browser **https://www.facebook.com/ groups/355859514864259/**